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UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL

(Only for new nonprovisional applications under 37 C.F.R. § 1.53(b))

Attorney Docket No.	6279.002/DHE
First Inventor or Application Identifier	Kim L. Richardson
Title	Method for Creating Interactive On-Line..
Express Mail Label No.	EL157449032US

APPLICATION ELEMENTS

See MPEP chapter 600 concerning utility patent application contents.

ADDRESS TO: Assistant Commissioner for Patents
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Washington, DC 20231

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1. [] * Fee Transmittal Form *(e.g., PTO/SB/17)*
(Submit an original and a duplicate for fee processing)

2. [X] Specification [Total Pages 59]
(preferred arrangement set forth below)
- Descriptive title of the Invention
- Cross References to Related Applications
- Statement Regarding Fed sponsored R & D
- Reference to Microfiche Appendix
- Background of the Invention
- Brief Summary of the Invention
- Brief Description of the Drawings *(if filed)*
- Detailed Description
- Claim(s)
- Abstract of the Disclosure

3. [X] Drawing(s) *(35 U.S.C. 113)* [Total Sheets 9]

4. Oath or Declaration [Total Pages 68]
a. [] Newly executed (original or copy)
b. [] Copy from a prior application (37 C.F.R. § 1.63(d))
(for continuation/divisional with Box 17 completed)
[Note Box 5 below]
i. [] DELETION OF INVENTOR(S)
Signed statement attached deleting inventor(s) named in the prior application, see 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.63(d)(2) and 1.33(b).

5. [] Incorporation By Reference *(useable if Box 4b is checked)*
The entire disclosure of the prior application, from which a copy of the oath or declaration is supplied under Box 4b, is considered to be part of the disclosure of the accompanying application and is hereby incorporated by reference therein.

6. [] Microfiche Computer Program *(Appendix)*

7. Nucleotide and/or Amino Acid Sequence Submission *(if applicable, all necessary)*
a. [] Computer Readable Copy
b. [] Paper Copy (identical to computer copy)
c. [] Statement verifying identity of above copies

ACCOMPANYING APPLICATION PARTS

8. [] Assignment Papers (cover sheet & document(s))
9. [] 37 C.F.R.§3.73(b) Statement *(when there is an assignee)* [] Power of Attorney
10. [] English Translation Document *(if applicable)*
11. [] Information Disclosure Statement (IDS)/PTO-1449 [] Copies of IDS Citations
12. [] Preliminary Amendment
13. [] Return Receipt Postcard (MPEP 503)
(Should be specifically itemized)
14. [] * Small Entity Statement(s) *(PTO/SB/09-12)* [] Statement filed in prior application, Status still proper and desired
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17. **If a CONTINUING APPLICATION,** *check appropriate box, and supply the requisite information below and in a preliminary amendment:*
[] Continuation [] Divisional [] Continuation-in-part (CIP) of prior application No: _____/_____
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18. CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS

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UNITED STATES PATENT APPLICATION

FOR:

METHOD FOR CREATING INTERACTIVE ON-LINE MEMORIALS FOR FUNERAL HOMES

By:

Kim L. Richardson

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING
37 C.F.R. 1.10

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BACKGROUND

A. Field of the Invention

This invention is directed to the field of funeral home websites and more particularly to website memorials that are accessible through the funeral home websites.

B. Related Art

Various website-accessible memorials for funeral homes have been developed. Some memorials are operated by independent Internet based memorial services, which have their own websites that are not part of the funeral home's website or associated with the funeral homes. These memorials typically contain information originating from the families of the deceased. The memorials also typically include obituaries, similar to obituaries that are published in the newspapers, summarizing and eulogizing the life of the deceased.

These memorials have various shortcomings. For example, they are often not edited properly or contain incorrect information, through either miscommunications between the funeral homes and memorial service provider or between the funeral homes and the families of the deceased. The memorials also sometimes have information that the families of the deceased would like to change later, after they provide the initial information to the funeral home. Current memorials are not geared to easily making these types of interactive changes after the initial publication of the obituary or memorial on the Internet. Oftentimes, once they are set up, the memorials are "static" and are difficult to change or edit except by submitting written changes to the memorial service provider and then waiting for those changes to be made by a webmaster.

In addition, these memorials are deficient in how they input and transmit information to the server that controls the memorial. Generally, these memorials do not provide the family members (who are organizing and paying for the funeral) with direct control over the content of the memorial.

As discussed in greater detail below, the present invention is intended to overcome one or more of these shortcomings. In particular, certain versions or specific embodiments of the present invention provide an improved method, apparatus or system for preparing, delivering, accessing and using website memorials.

SUMMARY OF INVENTION

One aspect of this invention is directed to a method of delivering or providing access to an interactive on-line memorial to an Internet user, which includes the steps of (a) providing a website connected to a web server, the website having one or more individual "memorial sites," the website and memorial sites being accessible on-line via a workstation; (b) providing a password for editing each of the memorial sites, wherein the password is preferably confidential and provides editing access to the one or more memorial sites; (c) accessing the main website and inputting the password to create a first memorial site; and (d) preparing the first memorial site by inputting a first data set to the first memorial site (by transmitting and storing the first data set in server memory), including "preliminary personal information," including the name of the deceased.

In a specific embodiment, the method described above additionally includes the step of preparing a second memorial site by accessing the website and inputting the same or a different password to gain editing access to and to prepare the second memorial site.

In another specific embodiment, a first workstation has a first level of protected editing access to certain pages of a website by use of a first password; a second workstation has a second level of editing access to a more limited number of pages of the website (preferably the "individual memorial site pages") by use of a second password; and a third workstation has no editing access to the website, but has viewing access to certain pages of the website.

In still another specific embodiment, the preliminary information of the first data set includes account information, wherein viewing access to the first data set requires use of the first confidential password.

In yet another specific embodiment, the first data set comprises a photograph of the deceased.

In another aspect of this invention, an on-line funeral home website for creating and editing on-line memorials is provided, having one or more levels of protected (confidential) editing access to different pages of the website. In a specific embodiment, the website includes a first set of pages, which are "multiple memorial site" pages, having at least a first page (e.g., a Director's Page), accessible from a funeral director workstation using a first password (preferably a confidential password). The multiple memorial site pages also include one or more "unassigned" (e.g., blank) templates for inputting information relating to a deceased individual, or the multiple memorial site pages can include a page that provides access to one or more pages that have such one or more templates (e.g., using one or more hyperlinks in the first page). The information that can be inputted into such one or more templates includes account information useful to a funeral director, e.g., billing information; basic personal information relating to the deceased, e.g., name, date of birth and date of death; and memorial information relating to the deceased, e.g., textual information typically found in funeral announcements or obituaries, such as a narrative eulogizing the deceased.

A template (or page containing a template) can be "assigned" to a particular deceased individual by inputting data into one or more of the fields in the template, e.g., by inputting the individual's name or some other identifier (e.g., a number) associated with the individual, resulting in an "assigned memorial site page," or an "individual memorial site page." The act of inputting data or information results in an "assigned" or "filled" template which includes "template data" (also referred to as "template information") which is stored in memory, e.g., on the web server. When the assigned template or filled template is accessed (for viewing or editing) from a workstation, the screen shows a populated template that includes the template along with the stored information.

In another specific embodiment, in addition to the first set of pages described above (the "multiple memorial site pages"), the memorial site further comprises a second set of pages (the "individual memorial site pages") including at least a second page, wherein the second page includes one or more assigned templates containing information relating to the same deceased individual, or provides access to another page that has such a template (e.g., using a hyperlink in the second page). In that embodiment, the second set of pages is accessible for editing from a family workstation using a second password.

In a specific embodiment, the invention involves a system that is capable of utilizing at least two workstations (funeral workstation and family workstation), with each workstation having on-line viewing access to a website. Different passwords can be used at each workstation to provide different levels of editing access to the "memorial site pages," which include a "protected first set of pages" ("multiple memorial site pages") and a "protected second set of pages" ("individual memorial site pages") both used to edit the personalized memorial site. The first password gives viewing and editing access to the "protected first set of pages" and the second password gives

viewing and editing access to the "protected second set of pages." The "first set of pages" includes at least one blank template (a memorial creation template which is "unassigned"). Preferably, the first set of pages also either includes a protected "Director's Page" or requires going to a publicly viewable "Director's Page" and then inputting the funeral director password before going to the protected first set of pages. (Preferably, the first password also provides editing access to the second set of pages. The protected "second set of pages" includes at least one assigned template (the memorial editing template), and requires inputting the family password for access to the second set of pages. The memorial site also includes pages that are "unprotected," including the displayed memorial, with the announcement (obituary). A third set of pages can also be provided including an account information template and a memorial editing template.

A specific embodiment of this invention involves a funeral home website that includes a memorial site including: (a) a first set of web pages, including at least a first page which includes an unassigned template for inputting information corresponding to a deceased person, the first page being accessible for editing by using a first confidential password; and (b) a second set of web pages, including at least a second page which includes an assigned template for inputting information corresponding to the same deceased person, the second page being accessible for editing by using a second confidential password.

In a specific embodiment, the first set of web pages includes (a) a Director's Page, which can be accessed by clicking a hyperlink on the main website; and (b) one or more pages for creating the memorial site, the one or more pages including one or more blank templates, wherein the one or more pages can be accessed by pressing a hyperlink on the Director's Page, the one or more blank

templates including at least a first template having at least one blank field for entering the name of the deceased person.

Also, the one or more templates within the first set of web pages can include a second unassigned template providing at least a second blank field for entering additional information corresponding to the deceased person, the additional information including a narrative describing the deceased person.

In another specific embodiment, the invention relates to a funeral home website stored on a web server, the website including a memorial site having at least two sets of memorial site pages, the first set of memorial site pages including multiple memorial site pages, not being assigned to a specific deceased individual, the second set of memorial site pages including individual memorial site pages, each being assigned to a specific deceased individual, wherein at least some of the multiple memorial site pages can be accessed for editing only by use of a first password and wherein at least some of the individual memorial site pages can be accessed for editing only by use of either the first password or a second password.

Preferably, with that website, the first password is a funeral director password and the second password is a family member password.

In that website, the multiple memorial site pages can include a Director's Page.

Also, in the website, the multiple memorial site pages can include at least one unassigned template. Also, the multiple memorial site pages can include a Director's Page, which has a hyperlink to an unassigned page that includes an unfilled template. Further, the individual memorial site pages can include at least one page having a filled or assigned template. Furthermore, the filled or assigned template can include the name of the deceased individual.

Still further, the filled or assigned template can include the date of birth and the date of death of the deceased individual. Moreover, the filled or assigned template can include a funeral announcement, and the funeral announcement can include a narrative relating to the personal history of the deceased individual. Thus, in a specific embodiment, a website can be provided, wherein the multiple memorial site pages include at least one page having an unfilled template and wherein the individual memorial site pages include at least one page having a filled template that is created by inputting information into the unfilled template, the filled template including the name, date of birth, date of death and funeral announcement of the deceased individual that includes a narrative relating to the personal history of the deceased individual.

Another specific embodiment of the invention involves a system for on-line creation and editing of memorials for deceased persons, including a web server associated with a first funeral home website, the web server including one or more memorial sites, each memorial site associated with a deceased person, each memorial site including a first set of memorial site web pages, each first set of memorial site web pages including one or more first level protected web pages requiring a funeral director confidential password associated with the first funeral home website for editing the first level protected web pages.

In yet another specific embodiment, that system can have a memorial site which includes a second set of memorial site web pages, each second set of memorial site web pages including one or more second level protected web pages requiring a family member confidential password assigned to the family of the deceased person.

In still another specific embodiment, the invention involves a system for on-line creation and editing of a memorial for a deceased person, including (a) first confidential access means, including

data stored in memory corresponding to a first confidential password to provide access to a first set of web pages corresponding to the deceased person; and (b) second confidential access means, including data stored in memory corresponding to a second confidential password to provide access to a second set of web pages corresponding to the deceased person; wherein © the first and second confidential passwords can be used to create and edit the memorial for the deceased person by inputting information corresponding to the deceased person from different workstations.

In another specific embodiment, the invention includes a system for on-line creation and editing of a personalized memorial for a deceased person, including a funeral workstation located in a funeral home and at least one family workstation not located in the funeral home, each workstation having on-line viewing access to a website associated with the funeral home, the website including or being linked to a memorial site which includes one or more memorial site pages associated with the deceased person, wherein different passwords provide different levels of editing access to the memorial site pages, including a first password providing a first level of protected editing access to a first set of web pages forming part or all of the memorial site pages and a second password providing a second level of protected editing access to a second set of web pages forming a subset of the memorial site pages, wherein the protected access provides the user with the ability to create or edit the personalized memorial.

With that system, the first set of web pages can include a first template for entering basic personal information relating to the deceased person, including the name of the deceased.

With that system, the memorial site pages can include unprotected web pages, including a displayed memorial page, which contains the announcement or obituary of the deceased person and a photograph of the deceased person.

Another specific embodiment of this invention involves a system is for providing on-line access to a funeral home website, which includes a personalized memorial site for a deceased individual, the system including: a web server having web pages stored in memory; the web pages including a first set of pages, the first set of pages being accessible by use of a funeral director password, wherein the funeral director password can be transmitted to the web server from a first workstation connected on-line to the web server; and the web pages further including a second set of pages, the second set of pages being accessible by use of either the funeral director password or a family member password, wherein the family member password can be transmitted to the web server from either the first workstation or a second workstation connected on-line to the web server; wherein the web pages include at least one page having an unassigned template for creating a personalized memorial site for a deceased individual; wherein an assigned template containing the personalized memorial can be created by inputting personal information into the unassigned template from the first workstation using the funeral director password; and wherein the assigned template forms part of the second set of pages and can be edited from either the first workstation using the funeral director password or the second workstation using the family member password.

Preferably, in that system, the first set of web pages further includes a second template for inputting a funeral announcement relating to the deceased person, including a personal history of the deceased person. Preferably also, in that system, the second set of web pages includes a third template that includes the personal history of the deceased person from the second template.

In another broad aspect, the invention relates to one or more methods. In a specific aspect, the invention includes a method of providing an interactive on-line memorial for funeral homes, including the steps of: (a) providing one or more memorial sites associated with a funeral home

website, the funeral home main website and the one or more memorial sites being accessible on-line via a funeral home workstation; and (b) providing a funeral home password for editing the one or more memorial sites from the funeral home workstation, the funeral home password providing editing access to the one or more memorial sites; wherein © a first memorial site can be prepared for a first deceased person by a funeral director associated with the funeral home by accessing the funeral home main website and inputting the funeral home password to gain editing access to the first memorial site and then inputting a first data set to the first memorial site, the first data set including preliminary information, including the name of the first deceased person.

Another specific embodiment of the invention includes a method of providing an interactive on-line memorial, including the steps of: (a) providing a website connected to a web server, the website having one or more memorial sites, the website and the memorial sites being accessible on-line via a workstation; (b) providing a password for editing the one or more memorial sites from a central workstation, wherein the password provides editing access to the one or more memorial sites; © accessing the website and inputting the password to gain editing access to the first memorial site; and (d) preparing the first memorial site for a first deceased person by inputting a first data set to the first memorial site, the first data set including preliminary information, including the name of the first deceased person.

This method preferably additionally includes the step of preparing a second memorial site for a second deceased person, by: (a) accessing the main website; (b) inputting the password to gain editing access to the second memorial site; © creating the second memorial site; and (d) inputting a second data set to the second memorial site, the second data set including preliminary information, including the name of the second deceased person.

This method also preferably involves a first workstation having a first level of editing access to the memorial site by use of a first confidential password; a second workstation having a second level of editing access to the memorial site by use of a second confidential password; and a third workstation with no editing access to the memorial site, but having viewing access to the memorial site.

With this method, the preliminary information preferably includes account information, and viewing access to the first data set preferably requires use of a first confidential password.

Another specific embodiment of the method of this invention involves a method for creating a personalized on-line memorial site for a deceased individual, the memorial site being part of a funeral home website stored on a web server, the method including the steps of: logging onto the website from a workstation; inputting a password from the workstation to gain editing access to a first set of pages, the first set of pages being protected from access by users who do not input the password, wherein the first set of pages includes a page having a first template having fields for inputting the deceased individual's name, date of birth, date of death and personal history; and filling the fields in the first template by inputting personal information in the fields, the personal information including the deceased individual's name, to provide a second template assigned to the deceased individual, the second template including at least some of the fields of the first template along with the inputted personal information, such information being stored in memory on the web server, the second template being accessible for on-line editing from the funeral home workstation, wherein a memorial display page is provided, the memorial display page being stored on the web server, the memorial display page including the personal information inputted into the first template, the memorial display page being accessible on-line to users without a password.

Preferably, with this method, the personal information additionally includes the date of birth, date of death and personal history. Also, the workstation is preferably a funeral director workstation, located in a funeral home. Preferably, the second template forms part of a second set of pages, the second template being accessible for editing by use of a family password. Also, the password is preferably a funeral director password. In a preferred embodiment, the second template forms part of a second set of pages, the second template being accessible for editing by use of a family member password, wherein the method additionally includes the step of editing the second template using either the funeral director password or the family member password to provide an altered second template stored in the web server, and to provide an altered memorial display page stored in the web server, the altered memorial display page being accessible on-line to users without use of either the funeral director password or the family member password.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a schematic chart reflecting the relationship among various parts of a specific embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 2 is a flow chart showing steps that can be followed to create an interactive on-line memorial site of this invention.

FIG. 3 shows a web page from which a funeral director can create, edit, or view an individual memorial site.

FIG. 4 shows a web page with a funeral director's template for inputting and storing personal information corresponding to a particular memorial site.

FIG. 5 shows a web page with a scroll box containing names corresponding to multiple memorial sites.

FIG. 6 shows a web page with a memorial creation/editing template.

FIG. 7 shows a web page with a publicly viewable memorial.

FIG. 8 shows a "Private Family Area" web page.

FIG. 9 shows a web page with a memorial editing template.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF INVENTION

A. Introduction and Definitions

The invention is defined according to the appended claims including their equivalents. The invention will now be described in greater detail below, including specific embodiments, versions and examples, but the invention is not limited to these embodiments, versions or examples, which are included to enable a person having ordinary skill in the art of designing funeral home websites to make and use the invention, when combined with available information and technology. Various terms as used herein are defined below.

The term "workstation" refers broadly to any inputting device capable of transmitting instructions or other data, and is preferably a computer (device with a microprocessor), but can also be a data transmitter without a microprocessor, such as WebTV. The workstation of this invention is preferably a personal computer in a network, but can also be a high-performance, single-user microcomputer or minicomputer used for graphics, CAD, CAE, simulation and scientific applications.

The term "web site" (or "website") is used in its conventional broadest sense, is located on at least one web server, contains web pages and other files, and is online, preferably 24 hours a day. The website includes pages stored in the memory of a web server. As discussed herein, the website includes, but is not limited to, the "memorial site." It is contemplated that a funeral home may have two different "websites," each located on different web servers, one of the websites including the memorial site pages discussed herein, the other website not having memorial site pages, but being linked to the website having the memorial pages.

The term "web server" refers broadly to a computer in a network shared by multiple users, e.g., workstations. It includes both the hardware and application software that performs the service. The "web server" preferably provides World Wide Web services on the Internet, and includes the hardware, operating system, web server software, TCP/IP protocols and the web site content (web pages). In a given context, the term "web server" may also refer to just the software that performs this service, which accepts requests from web browsers to download data, such as HTML pages and images. A web server can also execute related server-side scripts that automate functions such as searching databases. It can include a conventional computer server having software designed to carry out the functions described herein, e.g., Internet software. A "web server" can include a computer system dedicated only to the web server application, but it can also be equipped to run other applications. A single web site can have several dedicated web servers. It is contemplated that any server having the capability of administering and managing on-line services, particularly the "web sites" and "memorial sites" of this invention, will meet the definition of a "web server." In certain specific embodiments, the web server is directly or indirectly connected to a "central workstation," discussed below.

A "central workstation" (or "corporate workstation") is preferably a "guest" computer in relation to the "host" web server (preferably also a computer). In this invention, the central workstation should be physically located at a funeral home, the primary location for setting up, creating and editing the memorial site pages, and can also be referred to as the "funeral home computer" or "funeral director's computer." The central workstation may include any type of computer, workstation, or other data manipulation product such as a PalmPilot or WebTV. Data transmission between the web server and the central workstation is preferably via a telecommunications service coupled with or otherwise connected to an Internet Service Provider (ISP), which is any organization or entity that provides access to the Internet, including small ISPs who provide service via modem and ISDN or larger ISPs who additionally provide private line hookups (e.g., T1). The ISP (also referred to as a web server host or web host) provides access to the web server that has a funeral home website, with the funeral home having its own domain name. The data transmission carrier can be, for example, a telephone line, or a T1 or ADSL or cable modem.

The central workstation is preferably a computer (either a standalone computer or a computer on a network) located in a place remote to the web server, and where multiple funeral homes are involved, there will typically be multiple central workstations, at least one at each funeral home. Each central workstation is preferably directly or indirectly connected to the web server via a modem, router, or T1, so that the central workstation, having its own conventional on-line software, can engage in interactive data transmission with the web server. Preferably, with the present invention, the web server includes "server-side software" such that data on the web server can be edited from either the central workstation or a family workstation, without the central workstation

or family workstation needing to have special editing software. Each central workstation preferably has a "main website" (also, "corporate web site") associated with it. Preferably, in the context of the specific embodiments of this invention discussed below, the "main website" is the website of a funeral home. As discussed above, the funeral home "main" website is deemed to include the memorial site pages, although the funeral home may have a separate website that can be linked to the main website for purposes of carrying out this invention. As used herein, the term "family workstation," (also, "offsite workstation" or "end-user workstation") can be a computer also having hardware devices and software applications that provide Internet connectivity via an Internet Service Provider (ISP) so that the family workstation or offsite workstation can browse the main website including viewing the individual memorial sites. The family workstation or offsite workstation can be connected to a conventional Internet Service Provider (ISP) or on-line service, e.g., America Online (AOL). The term "family workstation," however, broadly includes any workstation operated or owned by persons who are not necessarily family members of the deceased, and is merely intended to emphasize the preferred aspects of this invention, i.e., that a family member of the deceased will typically be the one taking advantage of the editing features of this invention. In a preferred embodiment, the critical distinction is that the family workstation is one that is located at a place that is remote to the central workstation, e.g., at the home of a family member.

The "memorial site" refers broadly to a webpage or group of webpages located on the "main website" ("corporate website") containing a "memorial" for a particular individual, e.g., a deceased individual, such as an announcement (obituary). In a specific embodiment of this invention, the memorial site includes one or more of the pages described below that contain templates that can be accessed on-line and filled from a corporate workstation. Preferably, the memorial site includes

"multiple memorial site pages," which are pages that are not specific to any deceased individual or family, but which are used by the funeral director for creating and managing individual memorial sites. The "multiple memorial site pages" (the "first set of pages") includes at least one "protected" page (e.g., a Director's Page) that can be accessed only using a confidential password, e.g., the funeral director's confidential password, which in turn provides editing access to one or more protected pages, e.g., unassigned template pages, for creating accounts and/or creating the individual memorial site.

In another specific embodiment, the memorial site also includes "individual memorial site pages," assigned to a particular deceased individual. Preferably, some or all of those page are accessible using a second confidential password, e.g., a family confidential password, giving the user (family members) editing access to one or more "protected" pages, e.g., assigned template pages, for editing the memorial, e.g., using a protected "Private Family Area" page. Besides the "protected" pages which can be edited only using a confidential password, the memorial site also includes pages that can be viewed by the general public, e.g., by browsing. An "individual memorial site" refers to an individual or personal memorial site associated with a particular main website, as contrasted with the funeral home's website (e.g., "main website"), or the "multiple memorial site pages" which are not specific to such individual. Thus, each main website will include one or more individual memorial sites, and preferably includes multiple individual memorial sites, so that a single funeral home can potentially have individual memorial sites for each of its funeral service clients. Both the main website and the individual memorial sites can preferably be accessed over the Internet, for editing purposes, by the central or "corporate" workstation, and certain pages in the memorial sites can be accessed by one or more family workstations.

The term "funeral director" as used herein refers to an individual who either owns or is employed by a funeral home, and who organizes the funeral for the family of the deceased, typically having the responsibility of writing the obituary and conducting or supervising the funeral itself.

The terms "family" and "family members" refer to the family of the deceased, who typically commissions and/or pays for the funeral, and interacts with the funeral director to carry out the funeral, and who also usually has the greatest interest in memorializing the deceased in writing (e.g., by an obituary), so that others can express grief. The family also typically has the greatest interest in expressing grief and maintaining a memory of the deceased.

A "page" as used herein, refers to either a web page or the portion of a website that can be displayed on the screen of a computer monitor. Each page displayed on a screen has visual information that is typically stored on a web server or in databases or other servers connected to the web server. A page can also refer to a document occupying more than a single screen display (e.g., when a computer's screen is too small to accommodate an entire "web page" as defined by the web server). A "page" is preferably an HTML document in the context of the World Wide Web, and in the context of virtual memory systems is a segment of the program that is transferred into memory. Each memorial site includes multiple pages. In this invention, each time a hyperlink on one page is "clicked" the user is preferably directed to a different page associated with that hyperlink.

An important aspect of this invention is the "password," which as used herein refers to any data or text string that is capable of triggering a user's editing and/or viewing access to preselected pages as described below. The password can be actual alphabetical words or numeric codes or alphanumeric combinations, and preferably also includes (or has associated therewith) some type of account identification number or data that functions as user authentication, account validation or

personal verification. In a preferred embodiment, the password is confidential. In another embodiment, the password is a data set uniquely associated with an individual, such as data derived from a person's voice or photograph or even a person's fingerprint or DNA. Hypothetical examples of confidential passwords are "09as54qz" (alphanumeric) or "hokey" (alphabetical), which a funeral director can input while in a particular web site. A specific embodiment of this invention involves two types of confidential passwords, each providing different levels of protected access to a particular main website, e.g., a funeral director password with one level of access and a family member password with a more limited level of access. But in a preferred embodiment, even the funeral director password does not provide access to more than one main website. Note that the "passwords" as used herein do not refer to any password that might be held by the webmaster or entity controlling the web server, i.e., applicable to all the websites on a web server.

The term "access" or "accessibility" generally refers to the ability to store data on and retrieve data from a disk or other peripheral device, i.e., for editing. In some instances, the term "viewing access" is used, meaning that editing access is not necessarily provided. A person needs "access" (or "editing access") to edit pages on a website, e.g., pages within a memorial site. The term "edit" refers to the act of changing existing data, particularly template data that has been stored in server memory and can be changed from different workstations.

The term "browse" refers to the act of viewing the contents of a file, group of files, or web page. A "browser program" typically enables one to view data by scrolling through documents or databases. As used herein, the ability to "browse" does not necessarily include an ability to edit data, which requires "access" ("editing access").

A "database" is used herein in a conventional sense, referring to a set of related files that is created and managed by a database management system. Such systems are capable of managing various types of data including text, images, sound and video. Database and file structures are determined by the particular software used. With this invention, for example, Microsoft Access, FoxPro, or SQL Server can be used to create databases. The databases used in this invention can include a variety of tables, such as the listings of all the names of deceased individuals located on a particular web server, or on a particular corporate web site. Other tables can include a list of all family members having editing access to a particular website or a particular memorial site, a list of family members and friends signing the guest book and a list of stories written in memory of the deceased.

The term "user" refers to any individual who interacts with the workstation at an application level, e.g., at a computer terminal, and who is capable of inputting data or clicking hyperlinks.

The terms "template" and "form" (used synonymously) both refer to the programmatic and descriptive part of a programmable application. Generally, when a template is filled with data, it becomes a working application. Preferably, as used herein, a template includes a formatted screen display designed for a particular application, e.g., the creation or editing of a memorial site. A template can be "blank" (except for default information) in which case it is deemed to be "unassigned." Once data is inputted into the fields in the template (e.g., from a workstation) and entered, so that the template data is transmitted to and stored in web server memory, a new "filled" (or "assigned") template is deemed to be created and stored in memory, e.g., in the web server. As used herein, the terms "assigned template" and "filled template" (including partially filled templates) refer to the template itself, which is a formatted screen display, generally stored in the web server

in read-only memory, and the inputted data, which is stored in the web server memory (usually in a database) and which can be accessed and edited. When an assigned or filled template is accessed from a workstation, the template application software connected to or on the web server generates a screen display, which is preferably transmitted to the workstation, showing the template "populated" with the stored data. Thus, each template is typically an interface that a user can use (e.g., from a workstation) to enter data (i.e., populate the template). The data that is entered is then generally stored in some form of a database. The data corresponding to each fully populated template can be stored in a database record. The database record typically has an identifier that is used to call the record when somebody wants to view a populated template. The term "populated template" is also referred to herein from time to time as a "filled" template or an "assigned" template. It is contemplated that commercially available forms software can be used for the templates of this invention, including workflow software which can be used to create on-screen data entry forms and provide e-mail routing and tracking of the resulting electronic documents. Forms software can also include program development tools that build applications by designing the on-screen forms for data entry, updates and so on. Such forms are generally designed with visual programming tools that allow fields, buttons and logos to be drawn directly on screen. The logic can be selected, for example, via menus and/or written behind each field or button with lines of 4GL or 3GL. programming code. FrontPage, by Microsoft, and ASP-db Enterprise, by Major Micro Systems, can be used to create the templates (forms) of this invention. Other template programs include MS in MS Visual InterDev (by Microsoft) and Cold Fusion, by Allaire Company.

The term "hyperlink" is used herein in its conventional sense, preferably referring to a predefined linkage between one object and another. A hyperlink can be displayed on the page as

either text or an icon (symbol) or underlining or shading. The term "hyperlink" is used herein in its broadest sense, and allows, for example, a user to move from a first page (that is on the screen at the time) to another preselected second page, document or location, preferably one that is on the same web site, by "clicking" on some word or icon (symbol) on the first page. Typically, an alternative (but usually more time-consuming) method of moving to the second page, document or location is by inputting the underlying URL defined by hyperlink format (e.g., by blinking or underlining or color.) The "URL" is a Uniform Resource Locater which is an address that defines the route to a file on the web or any other Internet facility.

Preferably, the document format used with the present invention is HyperText Markup Language or "HTML," which is the document format used on the World Wide Web. Web pages can be built with HTML tags or codes embedded in the text. HTML defines the page layout, fonts and graphic elements as well as the hypertext links ("hyperlinks") to other documents on the web. Each link contains the URL, or address, or a web page residing on the same server or any server worldwide. HTML 2.0 has a basic set of features including interactive forms capability. Subsequent versions have added more features such as blinking text, custom backgrounds and tables of contents. Each version requires agreement on the tags (codes) used and browsers are modified to implement those tags. HTML is a "presentation language," and is not full-blown programming language such as Java or JavaScript.

A "guest" refers to a person who logs into a network or service but who does not have a user account or password. In certain specific embodiments of the invention herein, a "guest" might be any member of the public or a non-family member interested in attending the funeral of the deceased or reading the obituary. "Guests" are given a default set of "privileges," which may include limited

viewing access (browsing, but not editing) to certain memorial site pages. In a preferred embodiment of this invention, the "guests" do not have editing access to either the Director's Page (reserved for the funeral director) or certain other pages or templates (reserved for the family members). The family members are not considered "guests" within the context of this invention.

B. Creation of Memorial Sites Using Confidential Passwords

A specific embodiment of this invention relates to a method of creating an Internet-accessible memorial website that includes the step of inputting one or more passwords for the purpose of creating and editing a memorial site, to provide a displayed memorial. A password (preferably confidential) provides protected editing access to any "protected area" on the web site, i.e., "protected pages." Preferably, where a confidential password is used, a user identifier is also inputted along with the confidential password, as well as any other "access rights" text. Preferably, the confidential password is not displayed on the screen but rather appears as a series of asterisks ("*******") so that onlookers cannot easily learn the confidential password. In a specific embodiment, the confidential passwords are typed in along with an account identifier or identification number. In a specific embodiment, a single private confidential password is used for a particular corporate web site, preferably by a funeral director. The confidential password can be used to access different individual memorial sites and preferably corresponds to an individual funeral director (FD), in which case it may be referred to herein as a funeral director password (FDP). Alternatively, the single password can also correspond to a single funeral home, with multiple funeral directors sharing the same password. In either case, the password is preferably associated with a single funeral home, allowing a funeral director at the funeral home to create a plurality (multitude) of individual memorial sites on a single main website. This password is thus

distinguished from any password that might be used by the ISP or other entity controlling the server, as well as a password that a remote user (e.g., a guest) might use to gain on-line access, e.g., an AOL password. Thus, in a specific embodiment, a single server (e.g., the web server) will preferably have more than one confidential passwords that can be used, each one associated with a single funeral home or funeral director, each funeral director or funeral home preferably having a main or corporate website. Similarly, in a specific embodiment, each main website will have a plurality (more than one) memorial sites, each memorial site having a corresponding confidential password for the family members to have access to the memorial site (e.g., a family member password).

In a specific embodiment of the invention, which will now be described, a main website corresponds to a single funeral home, the main website having a plurality of memorial sites. The funeral director (FD) preferably views the main website, e.g., by typing in the publicly accessible domain name of the website (not the confidential password). (For example, a hypothetical domain name might be "www.acmefuneralhome.com.") By viewing the main website, the funeral director is able to browse the web site, which contains the memorial sites. Having viewed the main website, the funeral director can then move to a discrete "editing page," which provides access to pages that can be edited. Preferably, this page is one that is a "multiple memorial site page," meaning that it is not restricted to a particular individual memorial site, but functions as a "gateway" to the individual memorial sites. In a specific embodiment, a private "Director's Page" is provided, which functions as such a "gateway." The funeral director gains access to the Director's Page using the confidential password (e.g., the FDP). An example of a Director's Page from a hypothetical main website is reproduced in FIG.3 . Having accessed the Director's Page using the FDP, the funeral director is then able to transmit data and execute instructions to the web server and thus create and/or

edit any one of the individual memorial sites, ideally giving the funeral director exclusive or protected control over the contents of the individual memorial sites. The term "exclusive" in this context refers to an ideal situation, leaving open the possibility of a "hacker" being able to somehow access the Director's Page, and also leaving open the possibility that an unauthorized person will somehow obtain the confidential FDP.

It is understood that many of the website pages are preferably accessible to any member of the public for viewing purposes, but not for editing purposes, such as the funeral home "home page" and the memorial "display" page. These pages should be capable of being accessed for on-line viewing by any member of the public, by that person simply browsing the main website and typing in a word, e.g., the name of the deceased individual, or viewing and then "clicking" onto a list of pending or past funerals. As indicated above, a single funeral home may typically have a plurality of individual memorial sites, each one preferably corresponding to a deceased individual. To the extent the FDP is confidential, the funeral director can then use the Internet to create and edit this individual memorial site, while others are prevented or at least hindered from modifying the content of the individual memorial site, except in another specific embodiment as discussed below, where one or more additional passwords (a "second password") is provided to selected individuals for a individual given memorial site.

Preferably, after entering the editing mode by accessing the Director's Page using the FDP, the funeral director begins to create the personalized memorial site. He typically begins by configuring (setting up) an account for the deceased, preferably using one or more blank "templates" (forms) that are preferably already part of the memorial site. These templates are discussed in greater detail below. Any of the templates may include one or more blank fields which can be

completed (partially or completely filled), preferably, by "pointing and clicking," using a mouse to move to a particular field within the template, and by typing in alphanumeric data within that field. Alternatively, it is contemplated that conventional voice recognition software can be used to input the information into the template. After setting up the account, using the appropriate procedure, the funeral director can then enter basic personal information. This basic personal information will typically include the name of the deceased and information concerning the funeral services (time, place and possibly a map showing the location of the funeral services), all of which can usually be accomplished without involvement of the family members. The funeral director may also begin to write an obituary for the deceased. As discussed above, by using his editing password, the funeral director can write the obituary either at the time he is initially setting up the account and entering the basic personal information, or later, after getting input and feedback from the family members. Also, the funeral director can scan in a photograph of the deceased, which then becomes part of the memorial site. Based on this invention and the disclosure in this patent, a person skilled in the art of developing funeral home websites will recognize a variety of other textual and visual information that can be entered into the memorial site, by either typing or "speaking" in the information (using voice recognition software). The above discussion is thus by way of example only, and the present invention is neither limited by the procedure described above, nor by the types of information described above.

A contemplated benefit of the FDP is the flexibility and time allocation capabilities it provides the funeral director. Once the individual memorial site is initially created and stored in the web server, it can be retrieved at any time for editing, using the FDP. Thus, the displayed memorial page is not "static." Using the FDP, the funeral director can "log on" at any time to access the

individual memorial site for editing, "log off" after inputting or editing information, then "log on" again later at the funeral director's convenience. Such flexibility should offer a tremendous benefit to funeral directors, so that their time spent "on-line" can be allocated at their convenience. Another benefit of this flexibility is that the content of the individual memorial site can be edited, corrected or modified at any time, either before or after publication of the individual memorial site on the website (e.g., the displayed memorial page).

C. Use of Dual Editing Passwords

A preferred embodiment of this invention relates to a method of creating an Internet-accessible memorial website that includes the step of inputting at least two private confidential passwords for a given memorial site, each confidential password having different levels of "protection," i.e., confidential editing access. (As discussed above, each of these confidential passwords can be either an alphabetical word or a numeric code or some alphanumeric combination, and can also include or be associated with a user name and an account identifier, e.g., an account identification number). Thus, as discussed above, the confidential password can be (or have associated therewith) a user identification code, or an account validation or personal verification code, or any other item of data that can be inputted and that gives the user editing access to the memorial site. With this dual-password version of the invention, the first password is preferably the password such as the one described above, which preferably is a funeral director confidential password, which corresponds to a single main website and can be used to gain editing access to a plurality of memorial sites on that main website.

In contrast to the first password, the second password is more limited in terms of the access it provides, and can be used to gain editing access to a limited number of individual memorial sites,

preferably a single individual memorial site, and can also be limited as to how many pages within that individual memorial site can be accessed for editing purposes. The second password is preferably used only by family members of the deceased or others having a close relationship to the deceased. That is, the second password is not typically made available or known to the general public or others that have not been given the second password (unless provided by the family members, e.g., in a funeral announcement). In a specific embodiment, the second password may be referred to herein as a family member password (FMP) or family member confidential password.

In the dual-password embodiment of the invention, after meeting with the family members (e.g., personally or over the telephone), the funeral director preferably assigns them one or more FMPs, which gives the family members limited editing access to certain memorial site pages, which the funeral director will typically have already set up as discussed above. Using the FMP, the family members can edit or change certain memorial information (e.g., obituary information) on the individual memorial site. In a specific embodiment, the family members begin by logging on their computer and using their on-line service provider password (e.g., an AOL password) to get on the Internet. They may then access the funeral director's main website, e.g., by entering the domain name of the funeral director or funeral home (hypothetically, "www.acmefuneral-home.com") or by linking from another funeral home website. That is, in certain cases, the funeral home will have another website in addition to the main website, e.g., a pre-existing website located on a different web server. In those cases, the pre-existing website can be linked (e.g., by hyperlink) to the main website, which includes the memorial site pages. At the appropriate web page on the main website, they would then enter the FMP, providing them with limited editing access to their particular individual memorial site. The family members will then preferably use one or more templates

(discussed below) to input family information into the individual memorial site that has not already been or will not be inputted by the funeral director. It is contemplated that this "family information" will include information typically found in obituaries, e.g., a narrative that pays tribute to the deceased. The family information may also include photographs. The family members can also correct or edit information already inputted (entered) by the funeral director, e.g., correction of the spelling of names.

D. Templates

One of the features of this invention is the use of one or more "templates" (forms) which include one or more blank fields for inputting information. In a specific embodiment of the invention, the main website has a single unfilled template, which has different fields for entering or inputting information. In another specific embodiment, the website has multiple templates, each having its own set of specific customized fields. It is contemplated that multiple templates can provide added flexibility, supplying the ability to tailor each template to an individual funeral home, and also the ability to customize individual templates without disturbing the other templates.

It is understood that each of the templates described below (first, second, third, etc.) is deemed to include an initial template (referred to herein as a "blank" or "unfilled" template), which is stored on a server, and is not assigned to any individual memorial site, but rather is a "multiple memorial site" template. After data is inputted, into one or more fields of the template, a "filled" or "assigned" template is generated by the forms software (e.g., in the web server or in an application server connected to the web server). The filled or assigned template includes both the initial blank template and the inputted data that is stored in a database, e.g., in the web server. The screen shows

these two in combined form as a template filled with the data. As used herein, an "assigned" or "filled" template is deemed to be part of the individual memorial site.

In a preferred embodiment, the memorial site has at least one page with a first blank or unfilled template (e.g., an "administrative form") for inputting account information corresponding to the deceased or the family of the deceased. Once partially or completely filled (e.g., "assigned") a filled template is generated, with the account information being stored in memory, e.g., in a database on the web server. Preferably, in this embodiment, the assigned template is not accessible using the family member password. Preferably, this filled template is accessible for viewing and editing only by the funeral director, and not members of the public or the family members, even with the FMP. The first filled template has details about the deceased and the family that is intended for the funeral director only, e.g., the type of casket, flowers, place and time of the funeral and the like. (It is noted that some of these details may also be found in the other templates.) The first filled template may also include cost and billing information, and may be combined with billing software to include the ability to automatically print out or otherwise transmit invoices, i.e., automated invoice generation.

A page with a second blank template (e.g., a "memorial form") may also be provided. When data corresponding to the blank fields are inputted and transmitted to the web server, the result is a filled second template stored on the web server. As discussed above, the template itself and the template data are typically stored in separate locations on the server. This second filled template is accessible for viewing by both the funeral director (using the funeral director password) and the family members (using the family password), but can be made accessible for editing only by the funeral director using the funeral director's password. Using this second filled template, the funeral

director can allow the family members to view information that is relevant to the funeral (e.g., type of casket, flowers, place and time of funeral), but that the family members are not able to modify (edit). This non-editing access feature enables the funeral director to maintain appropriate control over the funeral services, for which the funeral director is responsible, and protects against unwanted editing.

A page with a third template may also be provided. Again, when the fields are filled, so that data is transmitted to the web server and stored in memory, a filled third template is provided, which is accessible for both viewing and editing by both the funeral director (using the funeral director password) and the family members (using the family password). The third filled template includes fields for adding more personal details about the deceased that the funeral director may not have access to or time to determine, including significant dates such as dates of birth and death. Preferably, the third template also includes one or more fields for writing an obituary, including a field for writing a narrative regarding the life of the deceased. Separate fields may also be provided for specific data such as high school and college attended, dates of graduation, names of surviving relatives and the like.

A page with a fourth template may be provided for scanning in film-based photographs or for transferring digitized photographic images, using conventional imaging technology, to provide a fourth filled template.

A page having a fifth template may be provided as well. Again, by transmitting the information to the server, the forms software generates a fifth filled template, with additional fields that do not require passwords for editing access, so that members of the public and friends of the

deceased can add comments or photographs regarding the deceased from remote locations, e.g., from their home computers and/or using their own scanners or imaging technology.

In another specific embodiment of this invention, not having all five templates described above, a page with a template is provided that includes the information described above in connection with the third template, i.e., the ability to write and edit the obituary from home. That aspect of the invention is particularly advantageous to both the family members and the funeral director. On the one hand, it gives the family members total control (and responsibility) over the actual content of the obituary narrative, which is one of the shortcomings of previous memorials. Because it can be accessed from the family's own home, the writing and editing process can be done in a more conducive atmosphere. On the other hand, the remote editing access feature is also a benefit to the funeral director, who with this feature of the invention does not bear the entire responsibility for the content of the obituary. This interactive aspect also makes it easier for the funeral director to manage communications with the family members and makes his efforts more effective and efficient.

It will be recognized, of course, that the invention is not limited to the above-described templates, and that a variety of template combinations can be provided, each having different fields, depending on the needs and/or desires of the individual or entity administering the memorial site, e.g., the funeral home. Commercially available software for developing such templates are described elsewhere in this patent.

E. Living Memorials

As used herein, the "subject name" refers to the person who is the subject of the memorial. When a "lasting memorial" is being created, the subject name is the name of the deceased individual.

In an alternative embodiment of the invention, when a "living memorial" is being created, the subject name refers to a living individual, who can participate in the writing of portions of his memorial in advance of his death. With this embodiment, the methods described above in connection with a deceased individual can be used in connection with a living individual. In that case, rather than writing an obituary, the family members participate in writing a tribute; the first password being provided to the person or entity administering the "living" memorial site, and the second password being provided to the family members (including the subject of the tribute) who are involved with the writing of the memorial or tribute. Also, in this embodiment, it is a living individual rather than deceased individual who is the subject of the individual memorial site.

F. Specific Embodiments of Invention

Several specific embodiments of the invention will now be described, incorporating various aspects of the invention discussed above. These embodiments do not limit the scope of the invention, which is defined by reference to the claims below, including the substantial equivalents of the various elements and limitations, but it will be useful in understanding the invention. Thus, as used below, the term "invention" is not used in a limiting sense.

FIG. 1 is schematic chart that reflects the relationship between the various parts of that invention. The web server 10 has multiple corporate web sites Nos. 1-5 (12, 14, 16, 18, 20), which are preferably web sites corresponding to individual funeral homes. The corporate web site is a specific type of "main web site." Each corporate web site includes multiple individual memorial sites. Various procedures for creating the memorial sites are described below and elsewhere herein.

As indicated by box 22, Funeral Director 1 uses a confidential password, along with a funeral director user or account identification number, to gain access to individual memorial sites within the

corporate web site. Meanwhile, as shown schematically by box 24, funeral director 2 uses a different funeral director confidential password, along with a different user or account identification number, to gain access to individual memorial sites within his particular corporate web site. Note that one funeral director, from his own corporate web site, preferably cannot gain access (i.e., access for editing purposes) to the other funeral director's memorial sites, from his corporate web site. By inputting his respective funeral director confidential password, each funeral director can be directed to a page (e.g., the "Director's Page") on his corporate web site, which will enable him to begin creating an individual memorial site. After the individual memorial site is created, each family member can then also gain access to certain pages or portions of the memorial site. The family members can also view (but not edit) certain pages of the individual memorial site, e.g., those that do not require the funeral director confidential password for access. The family members can gain access to selected pages (i.e., for editing purposes) using the family member password. Thus, referring to box 26 of FIG. 1, while family B can use its family member password for accessing its corresponding individual memorial site, it cannot use its family member password for accessing any other individual memorial site on the same corporate web site, e.g., individual memorial sites 12a, 12c, 12d, or 12e. Likewise, referring to box 28, family member D can access individual memorial site 12d only.

FIG. 2 is a flow chart showing the steps that are followed to create an interactive memorial for a specific embodiment of the invention. A funeral director can use his corporate workstation 11 to view the main website (e.g., the funeral home web site) by typing in the funeral home's domain name (e.g., "www.acmefuneralhome.com"). A family member can use his family workstation 13 to view the same main website by typing in the same domain name. In one embodiment, the funeral

director inputs the funeral director's confidential password 17, providing him with editing access for creating a individual memorial site, by directing him to the protected Director's Page 19. In an alternative embodiment, the funeral director can access the Director's Page 19 from the main web site without the need for a funeral director's confidential password, but needs to input the funeral director password for editing access to the individual memorial site. In either case, as shown in FIG. 2, basic personal information is inputted on a protected blank template 21, accessible either from the Director's Page 19 (provided the funeral director's password has been used to enter the Director's Page 19) or from the main website 15 (provided the funeral director password has been first entered). Other intermediate pages (not shown) can of course be used, such as pages that ask for inputting of the funeral director password. After the basic personal information is inputted on the blank template, e.g., the name of the deceased, template software generates a filled template which is stored on the web server, thus creating the individual memorial site. This individual memorial site can then be edited 25 at any time. For example, a funeral director can log onto his workstation 11, view the main web site 15, input the funeral director's password 17, go to the Director's Page 19 and edit the saved individual memorial site 25.

FIG. 2 also illustrates how a family member can edit the same individual memorial site from a family workstation. In one embodiment, the family member views the main web site, inputs the family password 27, and goes to the family viewing area page 29, which includes a hyperlink that provides access to a page wherein he can edit the existing individual memorial site 31. In another embodiment, the family member views the main web site, goes to the family viewing area, and inputs the family password, providing editing access to a filled template where the existing individual memorial site can be edited 31. Note that the family password does not provide editing

access to the blank template that is filled in by the funeral director 21, while the family password does provide editing access to another template that includes the filled (including partially filled) memorial site. Numerous other pages (not shown) can be added to the basic configuration of pages and commands shown in FIG. 2. For example, as described elsewhere herein, the family members can fill in other templates (and create corresponding filled templates) that contain fields similar to the basic personal information template 21 (e.g., a vital statistics template). Similarly, a variety of combinations and pathways to different pages can be associated with a single memorial site, all preferably being interconnected by hyperlinks. Nevertheless, a critical feature of the specific embodiment shown in FIG. 2 is the requirement of (1) a funeral director password for protected editing access to a first set of pages, including at least one page with a first template that is not accessible to the family members (e.g., for basic personal and/or account information) and at least one page with a second template for creating the narrative corresponding to the memorial (e.g., the announcement or obituary); and (2) a family password for protected editing access to a second set of pages, the second set of pages being a subset of the first set of pages, the second set of pages including at least one page with a third template for editing the narrative corresponding to the memorial, the third template preferably containing the saved contents of the second template that is filled in by the funeral director.

FIG. 3 shows an example of a web page in which the funeral director can begin to create an individual memorial site. This page may be referred to as the "Director's Page." The "Company Logo" 30 preferably includes the name of the funeral home, including any desired design features, and may also correspond to the logo used in any other funeral home website. Preferably, the Director's Page cannot be viewed by anyone other than the funeral director, i.e., it cannot be viewed

by the family members or members of the public. In this way, the funeral director can be assured that his procedures for creating the individual memorial site are private, confidential and protected. Preferably, the Director's Page is the "starting point" for the funeral director to create the individual memorial site. It can also be a place where the funeral director holds some or all of the relevant account information, including costs and billing information. The content of the Director's Page can be controlled by the funeral home, or by the entity that maintains and controls the web server and web site, typically either a web hosting service or an administrator authorized by that web hosting service, who is capable of periodically providing updated information specific to the funeral business.

Referring now to FIG. 3, the Director's Page preferably includes hyperlinks that enable a user (e.g., a funeral director) to view (and in some cases, access) other web pages, by pointing and clicking (or by typing in manually or speaking with voice recognition software). The Director's Page includes various descriptive text and hyperlinks described below.

The side menu 32 contains various headings and hyperlinks, which are preferably also shown on the funeral home's "home page." That is, the same side menu 32 headings and hyperlinks are also viewable by the family members and/or any member of the public who is browsing the web site from a different page. The side menu 32 includes a "Home" hyperlink, which allows the user to view the web sites' home page, and "Logoff," which enables the user to log off the web site. Side menu hyperlinks listed under the heading "memorials" include "Pending Services" listing all the pending (future) funeral services, "View Recent," which lists selected recent (past) funeral services, and "Search Past" which contains a listing of all past funeral services. Side menu hyperlinks listed under the heading "Our Difference" include "Cremation," which describes cremation options, e.g.,

pricing and procedures, "Directions," which describes directions for using the funeral home services, "FAQ," which provides answers to "frequently asked questions," "Our Staff," which describes the funeral home staff, and "Pre-Planning," which describes planning options for a funeral in advance, such as burial sites, caskets, etc. Other hyperlinks appear under the hearing "Other Links," such as "Consumer Tips," which describe to potential customers, e.g., family members, how to best utilize funeral services in terms of timing, casket purchasing, pre-planning, etc. The "Grief Support" hyperlink describes ways in which the funeral home can assist the family members during their period of grieving for the deceased. The main web site will typically include many other pages that are not described herein, including pages that may be part of the general side menu.

The body of the Director's Page includes descriptive text, in outline format, and also includes primary hyperlinks 34, 35, which are hyperlinks that provide access to the pages corresponding to the hyperlinks only from the Director's Page. The Director's Page is preferably both accessible and viewable only by the use of the funeral director's confidential password, and is not accessible or viewable by the public or even the family members with a family password. Thus, the primary hyperlinks can only be accessed by the use of the funeral director password. The "Create A Lasting Memorial" heading 34 refers to multiple hyperlinks including the "Add New Client" hyperlink 34a (providing access to a page described below with reference to FIG. 4) and "Write The Memorial" hyperlink 34b (providing access to a page described below with reference to FIG. 6). The purpose of the "Create A Lasting Memorial" hyperlinks is to allow the funeral director to begin creating the memorial site for a particular deceased individual in a protected environment.

Other primary hyperlinks can be provided, including the More Client Features hyperlinks 35. Preferably, the pages identified by "More Client Features" hyperlinks 35 are only accessible to the

funeral director using the FD Password, e.g., for the Director's Page. The "Update Client Information" hyperlink 35a, "Change A Memorial" hyperlink 35b, "Enter Basic Vital Statistics" hyperlink 35c and "Enter Burial Information" 35d provide access to various other pages within the memorial site.

Other hyperlinks include a "Help" hyperlink 36 that allows the funeral director to contact the web host (or memorial site administrator) by telephone or interactive E-mail communication. Various "Print Options" hyperlinks (not shown) can also be provided for printing the contents of particular pages, e.g., the memorial site, in newspaper format (e.g., for obituaries).

Other hyperlinks, listed under "Site Maintenance" 40 are also provided. These require the use of a confidential password ("the proper security clearance") for access to the corresponding page. Typically, the confidential password will be the funeral director's password, and, because the Director's Page is only accessible using the funeral director's password, the pages corresponding to the Site Maintenance hyperlinks are accessible only from the Director's Page. Thus, using the Site Maintenance hyperlinks, information in the pages that correspond to the side menu 32 hyperlinks can be edited. Thus, for example, the funeral director can click on the "Our Difference" hyperlink under Site Maintenance 40 to edit the page that describes the particular funeral home, which can be viewed (but not edited) by clicking the "Our Difference" hyperlink on the Side Menu 32.

FIG. 4 shows the screen (page) that is accessed by clicking the "Add New Client" hyperlink 34b from the Director's Page (FIG. 3). The page includes a blank template (form) 48 which the funeral director uses to open an account corresponding to a new memorial site. Once data is added to the fields, e.g., the name of the deceased is typed in and save, so that the name is transmitted to and stored on the web server, the template then becomes an "assigned" (partially filled) template,

which becomes an individual memorial site page," which can be edited later by entering the funeral director or family member. But as discussed below, the template 48 is "blank" since no data has been inputted. In this specific embodiment, this template 48 is accessible by hyperlink from the Director's Page, and is thus protected. However, in an alternative version of this invention, this template can be accessed (preferably by hyperlink) directly from the main web site, although both viewing of and access (for editing) to the filled counterpart of this template preferably requires inputting of a confidential password (e.g., the funeral director's password), so that the Add New Client template 48 is protected from unwanted editing access. While in the alternative version, such viewing ability and editing access will preferably require some intermediate page that asks for this confidential password, it is contemplated that the website can alternatively be configured so that mere inputting of the confidential password (or selected text that includes the confidential password) will also provide direct access to the filled counterpart of this "Add New Client" page. For example, the web site could be configured so that (if the confidential password is "hokey"), the inputting of "hokey-addnewclient" would send the user (funeral director) directly to this page, without having to go through the intermediate step of going to the Director's Page. Similarly, a web site can be configured so that any of the other pages that require a confidential password for viewing or editing access can be accessed directly without going to the intermediate Director's Page. Nevertheless, in a preferred embodiment, the blank "Add New Client" template 48 can be accessed only from the Director's Page, at the point where the individual memorial site is initially created.

Template 48 and its filled counterpart (not shown) includes certain basic information that is intended for viewing and editing access by the funeral director only, and not by either the family members or members of the public. Preferably, the template 48 includes a "Field" identification

column 49, which identifies the various fields, is permanent and is not subject to editing; and a "New Record" column 51, which contains blank spaces designed for inputting information. In the specific embodiment shown, the basic personal information includes name information of the deceased individual, i.e., his full name 52; first name 54; middle name 56; and last name 58. The personal information also includes fields for significant dates, i.e., the Date of Birth field 60; Date of Death field 62; and Date of Funeral field 64.

Template 48 can also include other fields. Although these other fields are shown as viewable in FIG. 4, they can also be hidden from the funeral director, viewable and accessible to only the web hosting service or memorial site administrator who preferably has the ability to edit all the pages on the main web site. Those other fields include a field 66 for a photograph, in which the default provision (when the field is empty or improperly filled) is "photo not available." Also included is "Basic or Complete Memorial" 68; and "Funeral Information" 70 (e.g., "Funeral services are pending.") The "Default Affiliate Number" 72 is preferably included automatically, and can be some text string identifier assigned to the particular "affiliate" or funeral home that owns (or leases) the particular corporate web site. The "Enter Your Staff Number" field 74 preferably refers to the funeral director's confidential password or some other identifier corresponding to an individual employee of the funeral home, so that the identity of the person inputting the information into the template can later be identified. The "Date Client Added" field 76 refers to the date information in template 48 was first added, and this date can be provided automatically by a conventional date stamp within the software used to create the filled template, e.g., ASP-db Enterprise by Major Micro Systems.

Finally, an "action" field 78 is provided, which, by clicking on "Cancel," returns the user to another screen (and a different template) without saving (e.g., without storing in the server) any of the data inputted into the template. By clicking on "Reset," the typed in information appearing on the screen in Template 48 can be erased and the same blank template can be reused. But clicking the "Add New Record" button, the data inputted on the template gets saved and stored on the web server. A new blank screen with the same blank "Add New Client" template 48 then appears.

FIG. 5 is preferably the first screen page that is accessed when the "Write or Change A Memorial" hyperlink 34b from the Director's Page (FIG. 3) is clicked. This screen includes a "scroll box," i.e., a window 77 with a scroll bar 79 for viewing the alphabetized names (located in a database) of all the individual memorial sites that have been established within a particular corporate web site. Using the scroll bar, the funeral director is able to scroll down to the name of the deceased individual from whom he wants to write a memorial. After highlighting the selected name 80 using the mouse, he can then either click the "Update" button 31, which provides editing access to the filled version of the "main memorial template," or the "Select a Name then Click Here" button 82, which provides viewing access to the same filled main memorial template.

Once in this editing mode, the funeral director can create (and later edit) the on-line individual "memorial" for the deceased individual using an unfilled main memorial template, an example of which is shown in FIG. 6. In a specific embodiment, after the data is inputted and stored, a filled main memorial template can be generated, which is viewable and accessible (for editing) from the Director's Page (access to which requires the funeral director's confidential password) or from elsewhere by using the funeral director's confidential password. As discussed below, in another specific embodiment, some or all of the filled main memorial template can also be made

viewable and accessible (for editing) from another protected page of the Memorial Site, e.g., from a page accessible to the family members using a family member password.

The main memorial page shown in FIG. 6 is an "assigned" page, wherein the "Sample Client" refers to the name of a deceased individual. The page includes Template 84, which has two columns. Template 84 is shown as a "filled" (partially filled) template which is available for editing. The field column 86 on the left side contains permanent "read only" data that describes each individual field. The Current Record column 88 on the right side has blank fields that can be filled by inputting information from a workstation, e.g., a keyboard. The Memorial For field 90 preferably contains the same text string as the name entered in the new record field corresponding to Enter Full Name 52 in FIG. 4, i.e., the name of the deceased. The Announcement Paragraph field 92 may contain the opening sentence of the memorial, i.e., an abbreviated version of what typically appears in a newspaper obituary. A History Paragraph field 94 is also provided, which contains a more detailed personal history of the deceased individual; this may also be included eventually in a newspaper obituary, but in certain versions of this invention, is not included in the newspaper because of the typically high cost of newspaper obituaries. In certain specific embodiments, additional "history" paragraph fields may be provided (not shown), e.g., a 1st History Paragraph field, a 2nd History Paragraph field and a 3rd History Paragraph field. Other fields may also be included, such as a "Proceeded in Death" field 100 which may contain the names of other relatives of the deceased who have died previously; a Survivors field 102 which may contain the names of surviving relatives of the deceased; a Funeral Information field 014 which may contain information regarding the funeral, e.g., referring to the church attendance of the deceased; and a Pallbearer Information field 106 which may contain the names of the pallbearers. It is understood, of course,

that other terms may be used to describe these above-mentioned fields, and that other fields can be added as well. An "action" field 107 should also be provided, which includes a "return" button that returns the user to another screen, an "Update Current Record" button which returns the user to the first field (without deleting anything in the filled Template 84) and a "Reset" button which erases all the information inputting in the fields of Template 84.

Preferably, Template 84 is not only used to create the memorial by adding information to otherwise unfilled fields, but is also edited later, e.g., completed or changed. Such editing access to the template can be accomplished by clicking the "update" button in FIG. 5 (or a similar "update" button in a director's memorial viewing page or any other page that is protected, e.g., accessible only to the funeral director, e.g., from the Director's Page. Preferably, the director's update memorial template appears on the screen when the Update button 81 (FIG. 5) is clicked, after first highlighting the particular name 80 corresponding to the memorial. As discussed elsewhere herein, an advantage of the director's update memorial page feature is that the funeral director does not have to complete the memorial at one sitting. Rather, he can begin to create the on-line memorial from the corporate workstation, but leave it only partially completed. He can then return back at his convenience to update or edit the memorial at any time, without having to contact the web master, web host, or administrator of the web site or memorial site. In this way, he can work on it after normal working hours, or can delegate certain non-creative tasks (such as inputting basic personal information) to someone else, e.g., an funeral home employee who has the funeral director's confidential password. Then he (or someone else assigned with the task) can compose the contents of the memorial at a later time.

After template 84 has been filled initially (and optionally edited), the portions of the memorial site that are viewable by the general public have been created, as exemplified in FIG. 7, showing a completed public memorial site page ("displayed memorial"). This public memorial site page can be accessed for viewing by clicking a hyperlink located in another page on the main web site (not shown) corresponding to the name of the deceased. This public memorial site page preferably includes the name of the deceased 130, photograph 132 (if available) and announcement paragraph 134 (created using field 92 in template 84 in FIG. 6). This page also includes various hyperlinks associated with the memorial site, shown in the side menu 136 of FIG. 7.

Some of the hyperlinks merely provide viewing access to pages on the memorial site corresponding to the hyperlinks, e.g., the "View" hyperlinks 138, which include the burial information hyperlink 140; "Condolences" hyperlink 142 (providing viewing access to a page written and transmitted to the family via a page that is accessible under the Condolences hyperlink under "Add"); the "Full Announcement" hyperlink 144 which provides a page with the complete memorial narrative, e.g., the contents of the History Paragraph created in template 84 (FIG. 6). Also included are the "Guest Book" hyperlink 146; the "Lasting Memorials" hyperlink 148 and the "Vital Statistics" hyperlink 150.

Another hyperlink is the Family Log-in hyperlink 152, which calls up a page (not shown) requesting the user to input the family password, which sends the user to the protected "Private Family Area" page, shown in FIG. 8. This page is similar to the Director's Page, in that it requires a confidential password to viewing access and provides viewing access (via hyperlinks) to other pages which are viewable to only the family members and/or pages that include assigned templates enabling the family members to input (or edit) certain information on-line from the family

workstation. As an example of the former, the "To View Guest Book Information" hyperlink 154 allows the family members to read the guest book, e.g., the list of persons attending the funeral. An example of the latter type of hyperlink includes a particularly advantageous feature of a preferred embodiment of this invention, which is the collection of "To Modify Information" hyperlinks, including the Announcement hyperlink 156, the Burial hyperlink 158 and the Vital Statistics hyperlink 160.

Clicking the Announcement hyperlink 156 in FIG. 8 causes the Family Announcement editing page shown in FIG. 9 to appear, which includes family editing template 162. Advantageously, most of the contents of the family editing template 162 (i.e., the filled-in fields) correspond to the information already inputted by the funeral director (shown in FIG. 6), e.g., including "Memorial for" field 164, History Paragraph field 168, Proceeded in Death field 174, Survivors field 176 and Pallbearers Information field 180. Also provided is an action field 182, which includes a Cancel button, a Reset button and an Update Current Record button, all having the same functionalities as the corresponding buttons in the funeral director's editing template 84 in FIG. 6. From the family workstation, the user can edit any of the information in the aforementioned fields and thus correct or modify information previously inputted by the funeral director. In this way, the memorial site can be referred to as an "interactive on-line memorial site." In a specific embodiment, template 162 is the same as template 84, except that only certain fields are viewable and accessible for editing. Thus, the family members, using a family member password, have the same type of editing access to certain parts (fields) of the memorial template.

Either before or after the family member edits the announcement information using family editing template 162, the user can view the finished "family announcement" by referring to a family

announcement viewing page (not shown), which provides viewing access to the "family announcement," the contents of which should have been already inputted by the funeral director using template 84 in FIG. 6 and modified by the family using template 162. As discussed above, the "family announcement" is shown as part of FIG. 7. Advantageously, the family members can both view and edit the family announcement using a family workstation (e.g., from home) or other remote workstation, rather than having to view it and/or edit it from the funeral director's workstation. In this way, the family members can both "check" and edit the content of the announcement.

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CLAIMS

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A funeral home website that includes a memorial site comprising: (a) a first set of web pages, including at least a first page which includes an unassigned template for inputting information corresponding to a deceased person, the first page being accessible for editing by using a first confidential password; and (b) a second set of web pages, including at least a second page which includes an assigned template for inputting information corresponding to the same deceased person, the second page being accessible for editing by using a second confidential password.

2. The funeral home website of Claim 1, wherein the first set of web pages includes (a) a Director's Page, which can be accessed by clicking a hyperlink on the main website; and (b) one or more pages for creating the memorial site, the one or more pages including one or more blank templates, wherein the one or more pages can be accessed by pressing a hyperlink on the Director's Page, the one or more blank templates including at least a first template having at least one blank field for entering the name of the deceased person.

3. The website of Claim 2 wherein the one or more templates within the first set of web pages includes a second unassigned template providing at least a second blank field for entering additional information corresponding to the deceased person, the additional information including a narrative describing the deceased person.

4. A funeral home website stored on a web server, the website including a memorial site having at least two sets of memorial site pages, the first set of memorial site pages including multiple memorial site pages, not being assigned to a specific deceased individual, the second set of memorial site pages including individual memorial site pages, each being assigned to a specific deceased individual, wherein at least some of the multiple memorial site pages can be accessed for editing only by use of a first password and wherein at least some of the individual memorial site pages can be accessed for editing only by use of either the first password or a second password.

5. The website of Claim 4, wherein the first password is a funeral director password and the second password is a family member password.

6. The website of Claim 4, wherein the multiple memorial site pages include a Director's Page.

7. The website of Claim 4, wherein the multiple memorial site pages include at least one unassigned template.

8. The website of Claim 4, wherein the multiple memorial site pages include a Director's Page, which has a hyperlink to an unassigned page that includes an unfilled template.

9. The website of Claim 4, wherein the individual memorial site pages include at least one page having a filled or assigned template.

10. The website of Claim 9, wherein the filled or assigned template includes the name of the deceased individual.

11. The website of Claim 9, wherein the filled or assigned template includes the date of birth and the date of death of the deceased individual.

12. The website of Claim 9, wherein the filled or assigned template includes a funeral announcement.

13. The website of Claim 12, wherein the funeral announcement includes a narrative relating to the personal history of the deceased individual.

14. The website of Claim 4, wherein the multiple memorial site pages include at least one page having an unfilled template and wherein the individual memorial site pages include at least one page having a filled template that is created by inputting information into the unfilled template, the filled template including the name, date of birth, date of death and funeral announcement of the deceased individual that includes a narrative relating to the personal history of the deceased individual.

15. A system for on-line creation and editing of memorials for deceased persons, comprising a web server associated with a first funeral home website, the web server including one or more memorial sites, each memorial site associated with a deceased person, each memorial site including a first set of memorial site web pages, each first set of memorial site web pages including one or

more first level protected web pages requiring a funeral director confidential password associated with the first funeral home website for editing the first level protected web pages.

16. The system of Claim 15, wherein the memorial site also includes a second set of memorial site web pages, each second set of memorial site web pages including one or more second level protected web pages requiring a family member confidential password assigned to the family of the deceased person.

17. A system for on-line creation and editing of a memorial for a deceased person, comprising (a) first confidential access means, including data stored in memory corresponding to a first confidential password to provide access to a first set of web pages corresponding to the deceased person; and (b) second confidential access means, including data stored in memory corresponding to a second confidential password to provide access to a second set of web pages corresponding to the deceased person; wherein (c) the first and second confidential passwords can be used to create and edit the memorial for the deceased person by inputting information corresponding to the deceased person from different workstations.

18. A system for on-line creation and editing of a personalized memorial for a deceased person, comprising a funeral workstation located in a funeral home and at least one family workstation not located in the funeral home, each workstation having on-line viewing access to a website associated with the funeral home, the website including or being linked to a memorial site which includes one or more memorial site pages associated with the deceased person, wherein different passwords

provide different levels of editing access to the memorial site pages, including a first password providing a first level of protected editing access to a first set of web pages forming part or all of the memorial site pages and a second password providing a second level of protected editing access to a second set of web pages forming a subset of the memorial site pages, wherein the protected access provides the user with the ability to create or edit the personalized memorial.

19. The system of Claim 18, wherein the first set of web pages includes a first template for entering basic personal information relating to the deceased person, including the name of the deceased.

20. The system of Claim 18, wherein the memorial site pages includes unprotected web pages, including a displayed memorial page, which contains the announcement or obituary of the deceased person and a photograph of the deceased person.

21. A system for providing on-line access to a funeral home website, which includes a personalized memorial site for a deceased individual, the system comprising:

a web server having web pages stored in memory;

the web pages including a first set of pages, the first set of pages being accessible by use of a funeral director password, wherein the funeral director password can be transmitted to the web server from a first workstation connected on-line to the web server; and

the web pages further including a second set of pages, the second set of pages being accessible by use of either the funeral director password or a family member password, wherein the family member password can be transmitted to the web server from either the first workstation or a second workstation connected on-line to the web server;

wherein the web pages include at least one page having an unassigned template for creating a personalized memorial site for a deceased individual;

wherein an assigned template containing the personalized memorial can be created by inputting personal information into the unassigned template from the first workstation using the funeral director password; and

wherein the assigned template forms part of the second set of pages and can be edited from either the first workstation using the funeral director password or the second workstation using the family member password.

22. The system of Claim 21, wherein the first set of web pages further includes a second template for inputting a funeral announcement relating to the deceased person, including a personal history of the deceased person.

23. The system of Claim 22 wherein the second set of web pages includes a third template that includes the personal history of the deceased person from the second template.

24. A method of providing an interactive on-line memorial for funeral homes, comprising the steps of:

a. providing one or more memorial sites associated with a funeral home website, the funeral home main website and the one or more memorial sites being accessible on-line via a funeral home workstation; and

b. providing a funeral home password for editing the one or more memorial sites from the funeral home workstation, the funeral home password providing editing access to the one or more memorial sites; wherein

c. a first memorial site can be prepared for a first deceased person by a funeral director associated with the funeral home by accessing the funeral home main website and inputting the funeral home password to gain editing access to the first memorial site and then inputting a first data set to the first memorial site, the first data set comprising preliminary information, including the name of the first deceased person.

25. A method of providing an interactive on-line memorial, comprising the steps of:

a. providing a website connected to a web server, the website having one or more memorial sites, the website and the memorial sites being accessible on-line via a workstation;

b. providing a password for editing the one or more memorial sites from a central workstation, wherein the password provides editing access to the one or more memorial sites;

c. accessing the website and inputting the password to gain editing access to the first memorial site; and

d. preparing the first memorial site for a first deceased person by inputting a first data set to the first memorial site, the first data set comprising preliminary information, including the name of the first deceased person.

26. The method of Claim 25, additionally comprising the step of preparing a second memorial site for a second deceased person, by: (a) accessing the main website; (b) inputting the password to gain editing access to the second memorial site; (c) creating the second memorial site; and (d) inputting a second data set to the second memorial site, the second data set comprising preliminary information, including the name of the second deceased person.

27. The method of Claim 25, wherein a first workstation has a first level of editing access to the memorial site by use of a first confidential password; a second workstation has a second level of editing access to the memorial site by use of a second confidential password; and a third workstation has no editing access to the memorial site, but has viewing access to the memorial site.

28. The method of Claim 25, wherein the preliminary information comprises account information, and wherein viewing access to the first data set requires use of a first confidential password.

29. A method for creating a personalized on-line memorial site for a deceased individual, the memorial site being part of a funeral home website stored on a web server, the method comprising the steps of:

logging onto the website from a workstation;

inputting a password from the workstation to gain editing access to a first set of pages, the first set of pages being protected from access by users who do not input the password, wherein the first set of pages includes a page having a first template having fields for inputting the deceased individual's name, date of birth, date of death and personal history; and

filling the fields in the first template by inputting personal information in the fields, the personal information including the deceased individual's name, to provide a second template assigned to the deceased individual, the second template including at least some of the fields of the first template along with the inputted personal information, such information being stored in memory on the web server, the second template being accessible for on-line editing from the funeral home workstation,

wherein a memorial display page is provided, the memorial display page being stored on the web server, the memorial display page including the personal information inputted into the first template, the memorial display page being accessible on-line to users without a password.

30. The method of Claim 29, wherein the personal information additionally includes the date of birth, date of death and personal history.

31. The method of Claim 29, wherein the workstation is a funeral director workstation, located in a funeral home.

32. The method of Claim 29, wherein the second template forms part of a second set of pages, the second template being accessible for editing by use of a family password.

33. The method of Claim 29, wherein the password is a funeral director password.

34. The method of Claim 33, wherein the second template forms part of a second set of pages, the second template being accessible for editing by use of a family member password, and wherein the method additionally comprises the step of editing the second template using either the funeral director password or the family member password to provide an altered second template stored in the web server, and to provide an altered memorial display page stored in the web server, the altered memorial display page being accessible on-line to users without use of either the funeral director password or the family member password.

ABSTRACT

A method of delivering an interactive on-line memorial to an Internet user can include the steps of: providing a main website connected to a web server, the main website having one or more memorial sites, the main website and memorial sites being accessible on-line via a workstation; providing a confidential password for editing each of the memorial sites from a central workstation, wherein the confidential password provides editing access to the one or more memorial sites and wherein the central workstation is different from the web server; preparing a first memorial site by accessing the main website and inputting the confidential password to gain editing access to the first memorial site; and inputting a first data set to the first memorial site, the first data set comprising preliminary information, including the name of the deceased.

Express Mail No. EV 339955565 US

F:\CLIENT\6\6279\002\PTO\PA5.DHE

Figure 1

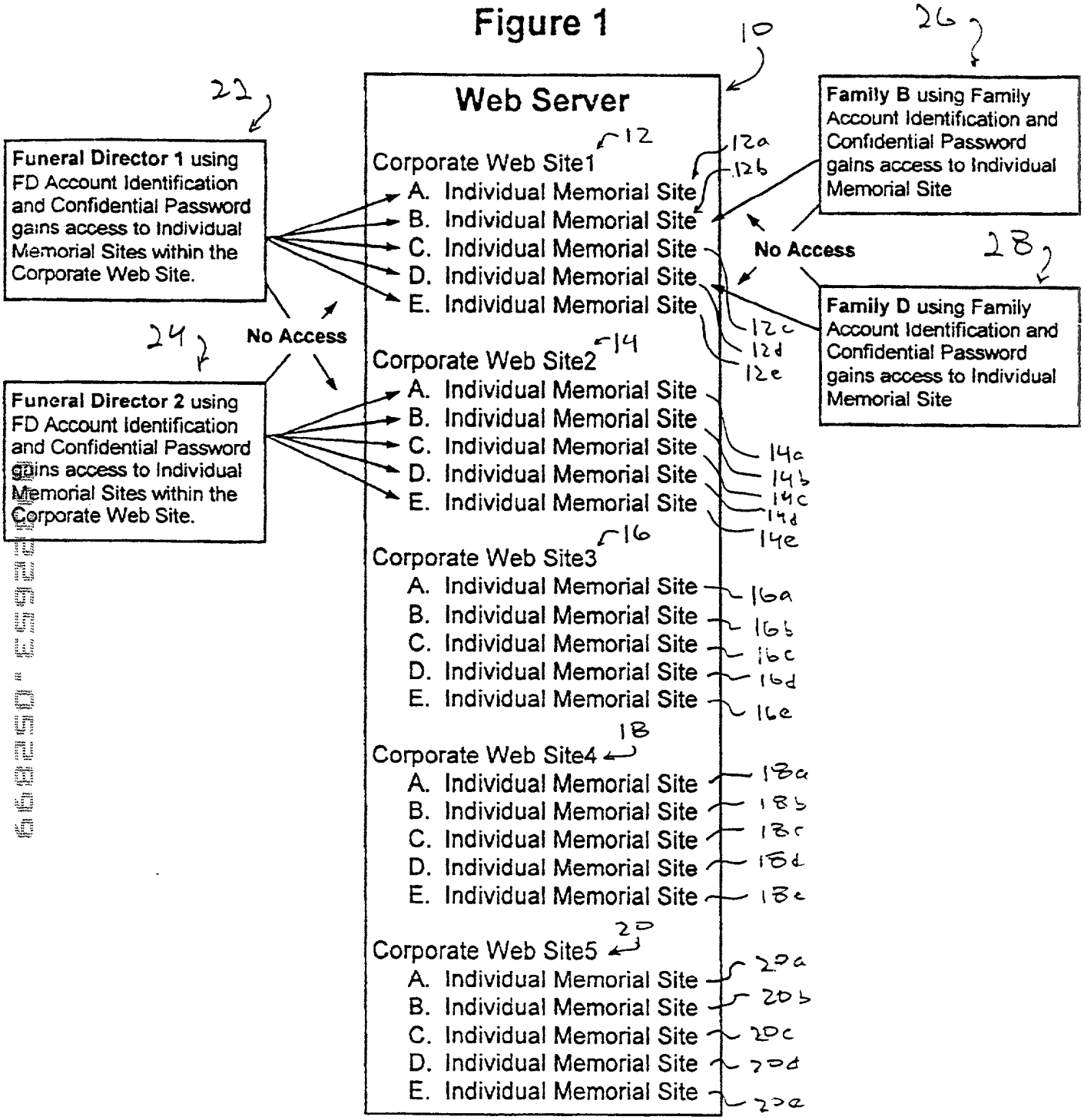

Web Server
10
Corporate Web Site1
12
12a
12b
A. Individual Memorial Site
B. Individual Memorial Site
C. Individual Memorial Site
D. Individual Memorial Site
E. Individual Memorial Site
12c
12d
12e
Corporate Web Site2
14
A. Individual Memorial Site
B. Individual Memorial Site
C. Individual Memorial Site
D. Individual Memorial Site
E. Individual Memorial Site
14a
14b
14c
14d
14e
Corporate Web Site3
16
A. Individual Memorial Site
B. Individual Memorial Site
C. Individual Memorial Site
D. Individual Memorial Site
E. Individual Memorial Site
16a
16b
16c
16d
16e
Corporate Web Site4
18
A. Individual Memorial Site
B. Individual Memorial Site
C. Individual Memorial Site
D. Individual Memorial Site
E. Individual Memorial Site
18a
18b
18c
18d
18e
Corporate Web Site5
20
A. Individual Memorial Site
B. Individual Memorial Site
C. Individual Memorial Site
D. Individual Memorial Site
E. Individual Memorial Site
20a
20b
20c
20d
20e
22
Funeral Director 1 using FD Account Identification and Confidential Password gains access to Individual Memorial Sites within the Corporate Web Site.
24
Funeral Director 2 using FD Account Identification and Confidential Password gains access to Individual Memorial Sites within the Corporate Web Site.
No Access
No Access
26
Family B using Family Account Identification and Confidential Password gains access to Individual Memorial Site
28
Family D using Family Account Identification and Confidential Password gains access to Individual Memorial Site

FIGURE 2

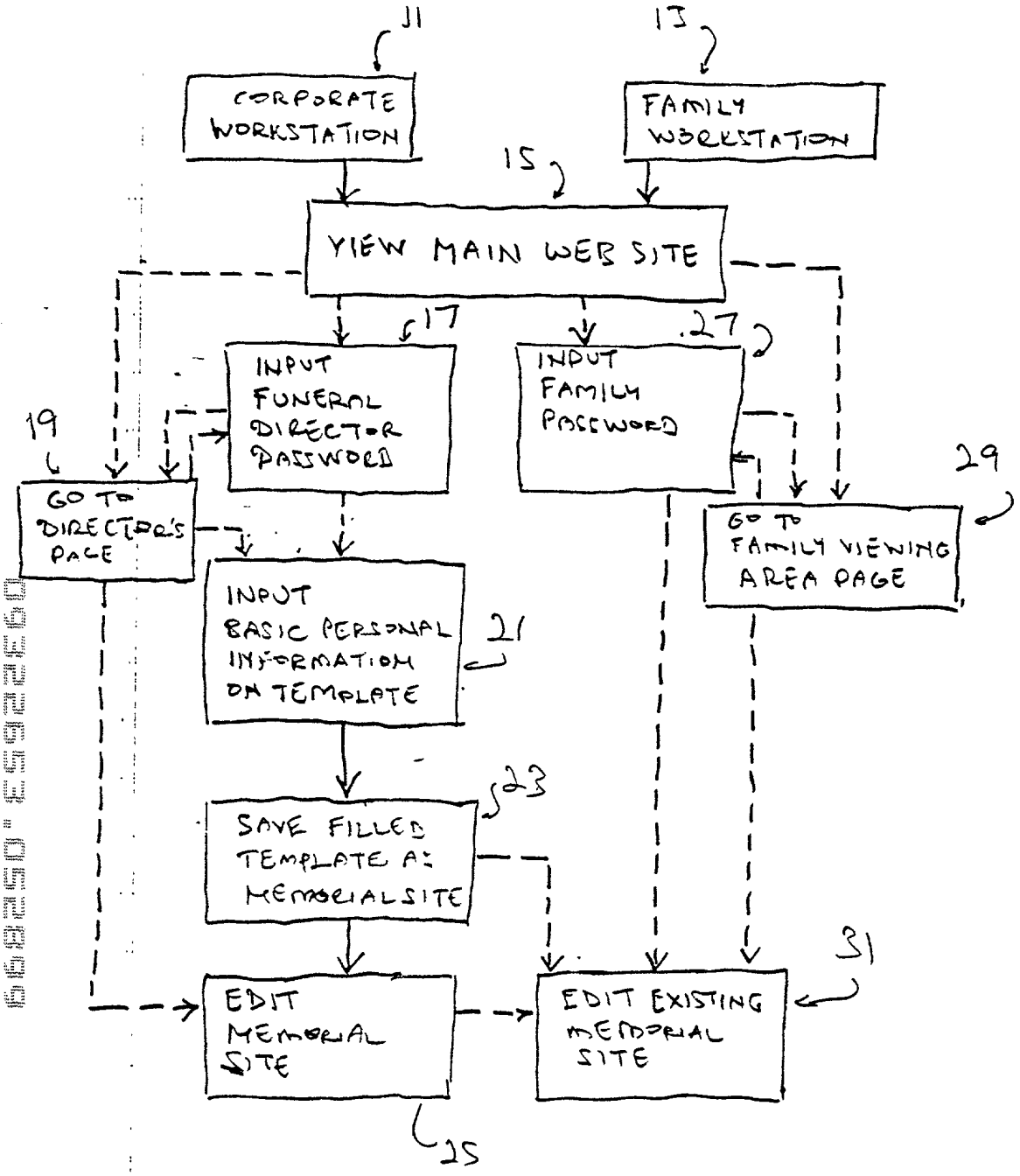
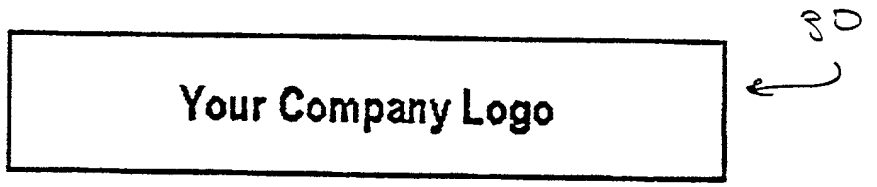

11
13
CORPORATE WORKSTATION
FAMILY WORKSTATION
15
VIEW MAIN WEB SITE
17
INPUT FUNERAL DIRECTOR PASSWORD
27
INPUT FAMILY PASSWORD
19
GO TO DIRECTOR'S PAGE
29
GO TO FAMILY VIEWING AREA PAGE
INPUT BASIC PERSONAL INFORMATION ON TEMPLATE
21
SAVE FILLED TEMPLATE A: MEMORIALSITE
23
EDIT MEMORIAL SITE
EDIT EXISTING MEMORIAL SITE
31
25

FIG. 3



30

32

Home | Logoff

Memorials
Pending Services
View Recent
Search Past

Our Difference

Cremation
Directions
FAQ
Our Staff
Pre-Planning

Other Links
Consumer Tips
Grief Support

34

Create A Lasting Memorial

1. Add New Client — 34a
2. Write The Memorial — 34b

More Client Features — 35

1. Update Client Information — 35a
2. Change A Memorial — 35b
3. Enter Basic Vital Statistics — 35c
4. Enter Burial Information — 35d

For Help Call 512.692.7186 or
Email MaryBelle by CLICKING HERE — 36

Site Maintenance — 40

You must have the proper security clearance to access this area.

Funeral Home Tables

Our Difference
Cremation
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Password Administration

Not Available at this time.

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Docket No. 50277-2000

FIG. 4

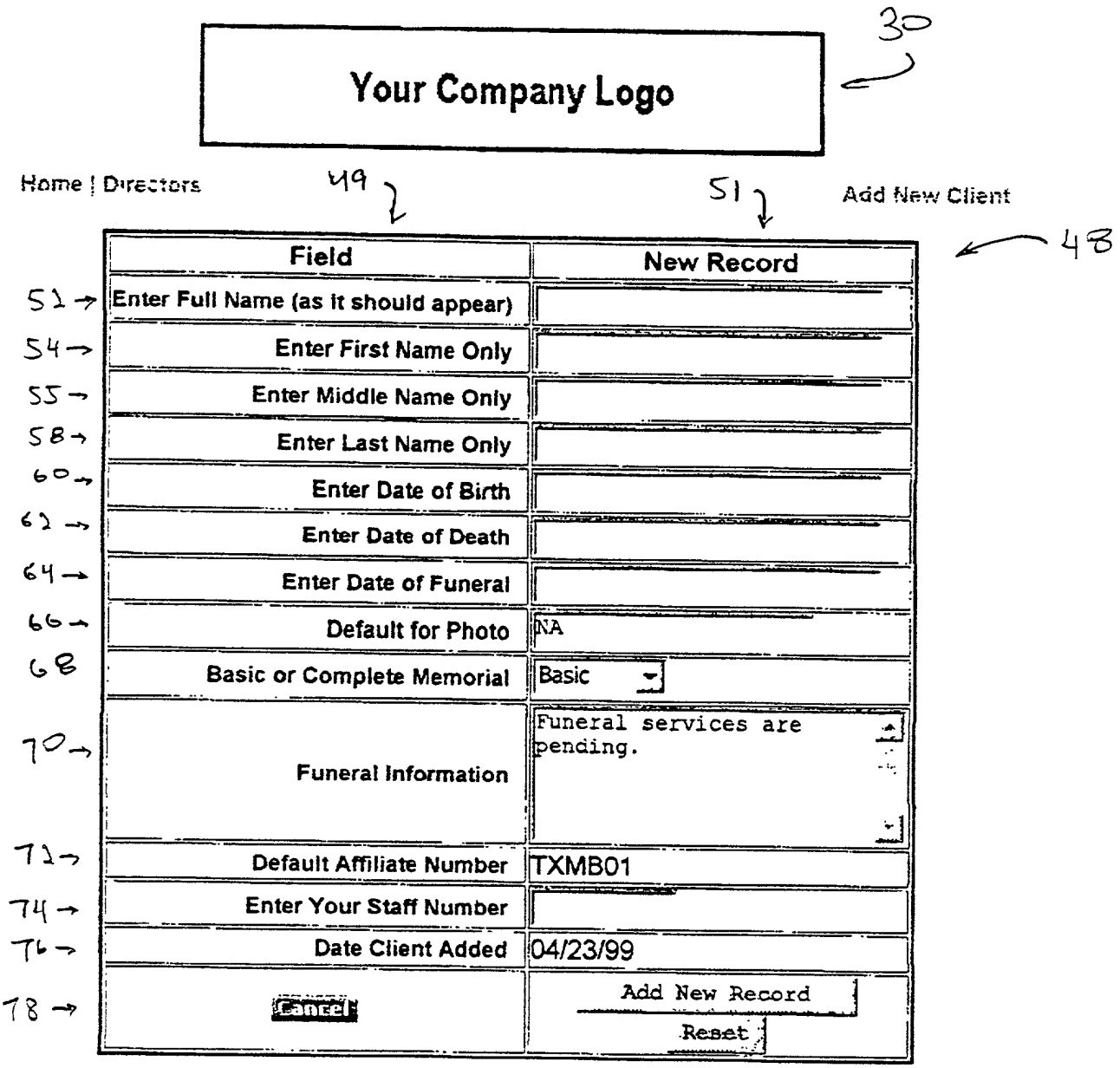
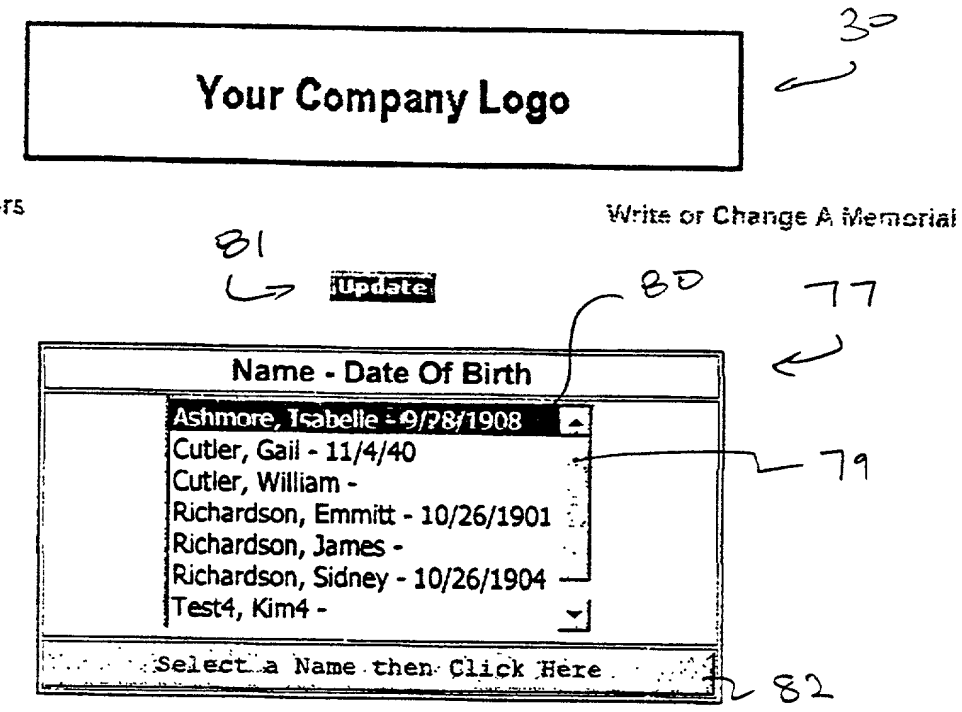

30
Your Company Logo
Home | Directors
49
51
Add New Client
48
Field
New Record
52
Enter Full Name (as it should appear)
54
Enter First Name Only
56
Enter Middle Name Only
58
Enter Last Name Only
60
Enter Date of Birth
62
Enter Date of Death
64
Enter Date of Funeral
66
Default for Photo
NA
68
Basic or Complete Memorial
Basic
70
Funeral Information
Funeral services are pending.
72
Default Affiliate Number
TXMB01
74
Enter Your Staff Number
76
Date Client Added
04/23/99
78
Cancel
Add New Record
Reset

FIG. 5.



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5,930,765 - 05/03/99

FIG. 6



If need to Add A New Client to the system, CLICK HERE.

Use the scroll bar to find the Deceased.
Using your mouse, highlight their name.
Click "**Select a Name then Click Here**" to view the record.
Click "Update" to open the record so you can make the changes.

88 84 86

Field	Current Record
Memorial For	Sample Client
Announcement Paragraph	
History Paragraph	
Proceeded in Death	
Survivors	
Funeral Information	Funeral services are pending.
Pallbearer Information	
Cancel	Update Current Record / Reset

90 92 94 100 102 104 106 107

Record Update/Delete Criteria : cAuto = 33

Make the additions or changes you desire.
Click "**Update Current Record**" to SAVE your entry.
Warning: Changes are not saved automatically.
You must click "Update Current Record" to save changes.
Click "Cancel" to return to the Form View WITHOUT saving your changes.
Click "Grid" and "Form" to toggle between individual records and the Scroll Bar listing.

Thank you for using MaryBelle.com.

FIG. 7

Your Company Logo (130)

Return to Funeral Home (136)

Add me to your favorites! (132)

Memorial Home

Guest Book
Sign for the Family

Add
Condolences
A Lasting Memorial

View (138)
Burial Information (140)
Condolences (142)
Full Announcement (144)
Guest Book (146)
Lasting Memorials (148)
Vital Statistics (150)

Print
Keepsakes

Family Login (152)



Isabelle "Belle" Ashmore (134)

Isabelle Beatrice Ashmore, age 90, of Cedar Creek and formerly of Corpus Christi, Texas and Granite Falls, Minnesota died October 31, 1998 at the Smithville Hospital after a sudden stroke. She often felt she was a young spirit trapped in an old body.

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FIG. 8

Your Company Logo 30

Return to Funeral Home | Logoff

Private Family Area

Memorial Home

Guest Book
Sign for the Family

Add
Condolences
A Lasting Memorial

View
Burial Information
Condolences
Full Announcement
Guest Book
Lasting Memorials
Vital Statistics

Print
Keepsakes

You have entered the Private Family Area.

154

To View Guest Book Information

The Family Guest Book contains information that cannot be seen by the general public. To view the Family Guest Book CLICK HERE.

To Modify Information

Click on the appropriate underlined word and follow the instructions.

Announcement | Burial | Vital Statistics

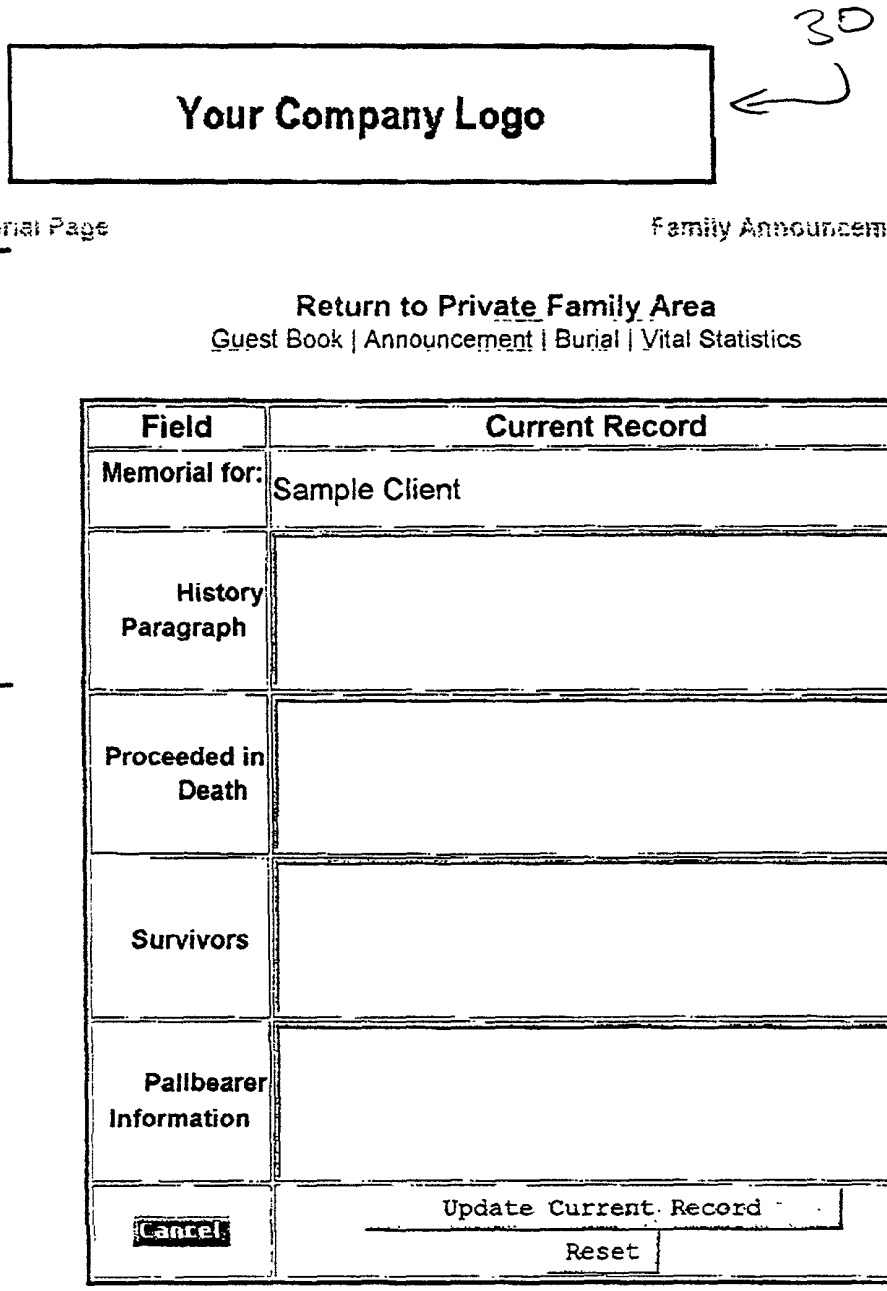
156 158 160

To receive help via email by CLICK HERE.

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09/30/2005 10:55:00

FIG. 9



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